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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed to help districts and schools, participating in the federally sponsored Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program, meet the evaluation requirements of the program as well as their own needs for useful evaluation information. Much of the information is applicable to any local jurisdiction engaged in school reform that wants to know how its initiatives are working and the changes needed to improve them. The guide presents a five-stage evaluation process which organizes the array of evaluation activities into clusters that are consistent in timing and purpose. The five stages are: (1) planning the evaluation; (2) designing the evaluation; (3) conducting the evaluation; (4) reporting the findings; and (5) encouraging use of the findings. Each chapter focuses on one stage of the evaluation. The appendix contains blank worksheets for use in the evaluation process. (Contains 2 figures, 3 tables, 8 exhibits, and 18 references.) (SLD)

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Evaluating for SUCCESS

Comprehensive School Reform:
An Evaluation Guide for Districts and Schools

by Louis F. Cicchinelli, Ph.D. and Zoe Barley, Ph.D.

McREL

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INTRODUCTION

For many educators, talking about comprehensive school reform brings to mind Yogi Berra's famous saying, "It's déjà vu all over again." Catch phrases like "continuous school improvement," "effective schools," and "whole school reform" have come and gone. Indeed, they seem to "erupt noisily every decade or so, often only to recede quietly into the background" (Murphy, 1990).

In some ways, the notion of comprehensive school reform is not new; at least the elements that make up what's called comprehensive reform are not new. However, comprehensive school reform attempts to move beyond previous reform efforts by bringing together much of what has been learned so far about creating better schools. The accountability of the education system for realizing the improved performance of all students is a driving force behind these most recent initiatives.

In the past, efforts to improve public education have focused on fixing the *parts* of schools, the *people* in the schools, or the *schools* themselves. Through these efforts, researchers and practitioners have come to understand that in order to improve student achievement, it is necessary to rethink and revamp the whole education system — from the classroom to the district office to the statehouse. This top-to-bottom overhaul is the essence of comprehensive school reform. This approach goes beyond the piecemeal improvement efforts of the past, not just by combining them, but by integrating them[1] (Sashkin & Egermeier, 1993).

Although the pieces of comprehensive school reform may not be new, understanding how to put them together in a way that changes schools for the better *is* new. Like any other pursuit, education is evolving. To ensure that we learn from our experiences and that continuous improvement efforts move forward, it is essential that evaluation be an integral component of reform initiatives. Evaluation should not just assess the outcomes and impact of new strategies; it also should guide the process of implementing and refining reform programs.

[1]The movement toward a schoolwide strategy under Title 1 is an example of this integrated approach.

Down the road, there certainly will be new directions and innovations in education. But that will not mean that current methods for creating better schools will have been proven wrong. Rather, it will mean that educators have acquired new knowledge about how to make schools successful. More important, it will mean that researchers and educators have not tired of trying to make this nation's schools the best they can be.

Purpose of This Guide

This guide is designed to help districts and schools participating in the federally sponsored Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program meet the evaluation requirements of the program, as well as their own needs for useful evaluative information. However, much of the information provided in this guide is applicable to any local jurisdiction engaged in school reform that wants to know how its initiatives are working and the changes that are needed to improve them. Thus, schools that intend to implement comprehensive school reforms using other funding sources should also find this guide useful.

This guide is based on the assumption that your district or school has already decided to implement a comprehensive school reform initiative and has identified a model or strategy.[2] We also assume that a plan is in place, funding is available, and that you are now facing a challenge related to evaluation. Almost certainly, this new program is adding a layer of data collection and reporting on an already overburdened staff — merely reporting student test scores no longer is sufficient; you are now expected to participate in evaluation planning, data collection, and data analysis.

The good news for those participating in the CSRD Program is that the program is intended to serve as a "reform umbrella" for other reform efforts underway; more specifically, the evaluation and data reporting requirements of other efforts can be integrated with CSRD requirements. In addition, generating the information you need to make improvements is under your control. Therefore, the new evaluation challenges you are facing present a unique opportunity for informed decision making at the local level. After reading this guide, you should be better able to

- plan a focused, practical school reform evaluation;
- develop a detailed evaluation plan;
- conduct an evaluation of school reform implementation and impact;
- report key findings in formats useful to major audiences; and
- encourage use of evaluation findings for program improvement.

[2]Should assistance be needed in selecting a reform model, *Making Good Choices* (Hassel, 1998) is an excellent resource available from the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

This guide does not address the various philosophical underpinnings of evaluation theory and practice, compare and contrast evaluation models, or quibble over the fine points of defining the meaning of evaluation. Rather, it provides practical information, tips, and tools, which together serve as a resource for novice and expert evaluators alike.

Using This Guide

Evaluation is not a "one size fits all" proposition. We recognize that the specific details of each locally designed evaluation of school reform will vary depending on the program crafted and the goals and benchmarks established to assess progress. This guide presents a five-stage evaluation process to organize the array of evaluation activities into clusters that are consistent in timing and purpose. The five stages are

1. planning the evaluation,
2. designing the evaluation,
3. conducting the evaluation,
4. reporting the findings, and
5. encouraging use of the findings.

In the Appendix of this guide, you will find blank *worksheets.* These worksheets are for your evaluation team to copy and use during the evaluation process. Throughout this guide, you also will find *exhibits.* These exhibits are not intended to be exemplars of what a particular district or school should try to create; rather, they are included to illustrate a range of situations, responses, and data options that might emerge when completing the worksheets provided.

To assist more experienced evaluators who may be interested only in completing the series of worksheets provided, special headings in ***purple italics*** are provided to highlight the sections of the guide that directly relate to completing worksheets. These sections also are listed in the Table of Contents (e.g., "Using Worksheet 1 to Align Requirements"). In addition, shaded boxes are used throughout this guide to highlight "evaluation tips" that are discussed in more detail in the main text.

Finally, each chapter focuses on one stage of evaluation. The stages are presented in the sequence in which they are typically conducted. *Readers who are just beginning* their evaluation may find it most useful to read through the chapters of the guide in the sequence provided. *Readers who have already begun* their evaluation may choose to use the guide as a resource and turn to the chapter that best matches the evaluation stage they are currently involved in, returning to earlier chapters only as needed. Regardless of the stage of

evaluation that your school or district is involved in, as the evaluation progresses, you may want to revisit chapters to help you modify your original design, data collection methods, or analysis plan.

CSRD Program Requirements

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program was implemented as part of the FY 1998 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Act passed in November 1997. The program was created by Congress to help schools substantially improve student achievement. The financial incentives provided under this federal initiative signal a shift away from support for more limited or targeted interventions to support for more sweeping, comprehensive school reform strategies. The multi-year initiative, funded at $145 million in each of its first two years, seeks to involve more than 2,500 schools across the nation in implementing research-based comprehensive school reform programs to help see that all children meet challenging content and performance standards.

In an effort to ensure that only comprehensive school reform programs are funded under this initiative, the legislation clearly stipulates the characteristics of qualifying programs and goes so far as to list examples of established reform models that might form the basis of local comprehensive reform programs.[3] (However, the legislation does provide for the implementation of locally developed models.)

Perhaps the most important feature of this new federal initiative is its focus on coherent, schoolwide reform efforts, rather than on a collection of independent, uncoordinated reform projects. This focus encourages schools to align existing funds, say from Title 1 programs, with CSRD funds to increase the prospects for successful comprehensive school reform.

Those involved in planning and conducting an evaluation of local reform efforts launched under this federal initiative should consider the nine program criteria shown in Table 1, the characteristics of the specific reform model selected or created, state department of education evaluation requirements, and the local context in which the effort will be undertaken. An evaluation plan (criterion 8) is itself one of the federal program requirements for participating schools; this plan should be built around the measurable goals and benchmarks (criterion 4) established for a CSRD Program.

[3] A review of these and other comprehensive school reform models is provided in the *Catalog of School Reform Models* (1st ed.) and its Addendum (August 1999). These materials are available online at http://nwrel.org/scpd/natspec/catalog.

Table 1
CSRD Program Criteria
as Identified in the Federal Legislation

1. Employ effective, research-based methods and strategies.
2. Have a comprehensive school reform plan with aligned components.
3. Provide high-quality professional development.
4. Have measurable goals and benchmarks.
5. Have support within the school.
6. Provide meaningful parental and community involvement.
7. Use high-quality external technical support and assistance.
8. Have an evaluation plan.
9. Use other resources to coordinate services and support and sustain reform.

What You Should Know About Evaluation

There are many, defensible ways to carry out educational program evaluations. Often the best approach is eclectic, combining what appears to be best from various methods rather than adhering to a particular evaluation model. The visibility of a program evaluation can be increased by considering it an integral component of the overall reform effort. The evaluation should provide information to all stakeholders about progress toward stated program goals and about the impact and outcomes realized. Because many outcomes take considerable time to emerge, it is important to maintain a continuous flow of evaluative information, making corrections and adjustments along the way to increase the likelihood that outcomes will be realized.

<u>Examine process and impact.</u> A program evaluation certainly should document the intermediate and long-term outcomes of a reform effort. A truly useful evaluation also should examine the adequacy of implementation processes in view of the outcomes observed. In short, an evaluation should provide feedback to decision makers and participants about needed program modifications and improvements. Evaluation should be an integral and ongoing part of the reform program; it should be embedded in program operations rather than tacked on as an additional administrative task to meet someone else's requirements. Thus, evaluation planning is best begun in the early stages of the program "start-up" phase.

Create a flexible design. Just as program adjustments should be made when necessary, so, too, should evaluation designs be flexible enough to allow for modifications when needed. In this way the evaluation can respond to important feedback and insights about unanticipated problem areas. If a program element does not seem to be working well, it must be possible to adjust the evaluation plan to obtain the needed evaluative information. For example, if teacher training is not going well, the evaluation could be altered to include a focus group of teachers to assess the nature of the problem.

Keep design realistic. The evaluation effort should be as comprehensive and rigorous as possible, yet realistic in scope and demand given available resources. There are many aspects of a complex program that can be evaluated. Your job is to identify the most important questions and give them priority. Data collection can be expensive, but time and money are always limited; therefore, resources should be directed to learning about the most critical program components and issues. One strategy for using scarce resources wisely is to be clear about why particular information is being collected. It is useful to know — in advance — how data sets will be used to answer specific questions. If there is no clear reason to collect a data set other than it is available or relatively easy to obtain, it should be eliminated from the evaluation design. A carefully chosen evaluation consultant, brought in at the design stage, can help you identify cost-effective ways to focus the evaluation, maintaining acceptable standards while maximizing available resources.

Establish an evaluation team. An evaluation team is essential to the successful design and ongoing maintenance of an evaluation effort. Each member must be given release time to focus on these new duties. A small, core team of staff members should be established, and opportunities for discussion and coordination throughout the building should be frequent and planned. One person should be designated as the point of contact for evaluation-related issues and questions; this team leader is responsible for convening the evaluation team and ensuring that others are included in all stages of the evaluation effort as appropriate. The team also should be responsible for acquiring outside expertise and assistance as needed. A larger team that includes community members can serve as an advisory group for the core team.

STAGE 1. PLANNING THE EVALUATION

Discussing the details of an evaluation design (e.g., evaluation questions, measures, methods, analysis) are often where evaluators begin. This temptation should be resisted; take time to think and plan first! Considerable time and effort can be saved by completing four planning steps:

- Define the purpose(s) of the evaluation.
- Identify program evaluation requirements.
- Understand the evaluation context.
- Consider the use of an outside consultant.

Define the Purpose(s) of the Evaluation

It is very important to be clear about what you expect your evaluation to accomplish. At a minimum, it should provide the data you need to meet the reporting requirements associated with maintaining funding for your new initiative. Equally important, however, is the evaluation of outcomes and impact and an analysis of the processes used to attain them in order to make programming adjustments along the way. The evaluation should examine progress, assess the accomplishment of intermediate objectives, and provide findings in a timely manner so that needed programmatic adjustments can be made as required.

Identify Program Evaluation Requirements

First among your planning tasks is the identification of all evaluation requirements that must be met. Requirements that must be considered in designing your comprehensive school reform evaluation are plentiful and come from a number of sources:

- the federal government,
- state departments of education,
- reform model developers, and
- (of course) your district and/or building constituents.

At one level, federal and state evaluation requirements are among the most important since continued funding, in part, depends on meeting them. States and districts participating in the CSRD Program were required to outline evaluation plans in their proposals. In many cases, states passed the responsibility for evaluation to funded districts. And don't forget that many recommended CSRD models have evaluation components and requirements of their own. These requirements will vary depending on the model(s) you have chosen to incorporate into your reform program. (If you have adopted an established reform model, there will be a contact person with whom you can work. This guide identifies that person as the *reform model developer.*) Finally, if you are at the school level, there may well be evaluation questions about progress that require the collection of data detailed enough to guide teachers and administrators in making program adjustments. Add them to the mix!

Federal guidelines. A review of the federal guidelines for CSRD Program evaluations[4] reveals the following requirements:

- The primary focus of the evaluation is measuring program impact on student academic performance. But performance measures are not limited to student achievement.
- Student performance measures should be clearly related to intended program outcomes. Both quantitative and qualitative data should be used.
- Student achievement performance assessments should be the same ones used for accountability in Title I, and assessment results should be disaggregated by the categories specified in Title I to examine program impact on targeted student groups.
- Performance measures should be compared with past performance at the same site, performance at similar sites within the district, or against national, state, or local student performance standards.
- Program implementation must be assessed. Both program start-up and long-term maintenance should be examined.
- Areas that should be tracked for implementation include stakeholder support, parental participation, continuous staff development, and monitoring for performance.
- The nature, extent, source, and perceived usefulness of external technical assistance should be assessed.

[4]See Guidelines on the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program. U.S. Department of Education, March 13, 1998, online at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/csrdgi.html.

These evaluation requirements are addressed as they relate to specific activities in the remaining stages of evaluation. In the planning stage, it is sufficient to simply identify, articulate, and align them.

State and district requirements. State department of education solicitations for proposals are another source to examine to make sure that the evaluation you design meets specified guidelines. Also, your state probably has required funded districts and buildings to address evaluation in some specific way. Although you may feel that your proposal has responded completely to state requirements, it is worth another look. Continued funding may depend on compliance. As an example of what you might expect to find, Table 2 presents the evaluation requirements from a CSRD proposal that a state submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

Table 2
Example State CSRD Evaluation Requirements

The state will contract with an independent evaluator. Components to be evaluated will include the following:

- Leadership at the building level
- Support from the district
- Authenticity of implementation
- Effect of professional development
- Quality of parent involvement
- Effect and quality of external support
- Continuing commitment of faculty, staff, and administrators
- Effect of CSRD Program on student achievement

In addition, the district must design, describe in the application, and implement an evaluation of both the process and the results of the CSRD Program implemented in each school included in the application. Staff from each building must also describe how they plan to evaluate the program they are implementing.

Reform model developer requirements. As part of the planning process, you should carefully examine what the developer of the reform model you have selected may expect of your building or district in relation to evaluation. You should note any data collection requirements and whether you will have

access to data or findings resulting from the developer's work. If access is provided, consider using these data to answer evaluation questions, including those you have posed.

Using Worksheet 1 to Align Requirements

Exhibit 1 illustrates how Worksheet 1 can be used to organize and align the various evaluation requirements that your CSRD Program must meet from federal and state agencies, your own district, and from the reform model developer. This exhibit shows how the sets of evaluation requirements overlap. Recognizing this redundancy at the outset can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your evaluation design.

Understand the Evaluation Context

Next it is important to understand the local context in which the program will be implemented and the evaluation conducted. Contextual factors may affect your choice of evaluation design and data collection strategies and how key stakeholders use the results. Thus, the objective of this step in the process is to get the "lay of the land" and set the boundaries of the evaluation.

Using Worksheet 2 to Organize Planning Information

Four areas should be considered: (1) local needs, (2) program elements, (3) stakeholder expectations, and (4) availability of evaluation resources and expertise. Worksheet 2 is designed to organize the information you develop as you respond to questions related to each of these four areas. Exhibit 2 offers a collection of possible responses to each of the questions. These examples are intended to stimulate thinking and to illustrate the types of responses you can expect to encounter. Overall, the worksheet is designed to help you organize the planning information that was collected through interviews and document review.

Local needs. Your proposal is perhaps the best place to identify local needs or conditions requiring improvement. These may be explicitly stated or can be inferred from the proposal's statement of goals and objectives. To gain a clear understanding of needs or conditions that can be improved, it may be necessary to expand your sources to include other school reports and the views of community members and school staff. You should attempt to answer the following question:

- What local education needs or conditions were the impetus for developing the reform program?

Program elements. When describing your reform program, you may want to include a synopsis of classroom activities, support services, or model components. Your proposal and the materials provided by your reform model developer are the best sources of information to describe your program.

Exhibit 1 Example of Completed Worksheet 1: Alignment of Evaluation Requirements

Category	List of Requirements Federal, State, District, Building *Note*: Federal requirements, noted with bullets in the "Federal" column, apply to all CSRD Programs. This exhibit uses *italics* for examples of state requirements and checkmarks (✔) for examples of district, school, and reform model developer requirements.	Source: Federal	State *MO*	District *Lakeland*	Building *Bond Elem*	Reform Model Developer
Purpose/Objectives of Evaluation	Measure impact on student academic performance	•	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Relate performance measures to intended program outcomes	•	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Program implementation assessed (*state adds authenticity*)	•	✔		✔	
	Program start-up and long-term maintenance examined	•				
	Stakeholder support	•	✔		✔	
	Parental participation (*state adds quality*)	•	✔		✔	
	Staff development (*state adds effect*)	•	✔			
	Monitoring for performance should be tracked	•				
	Nature, extent, source, and perceived usefulness of external technical assistance assessed	•			✔	
	Leadership at the building level		✔		✔	
	Support from the district		✔	✔	✔	✔
	Commitment of faculty, staff, & administrators		✔	✔	✔	✔
Evaluation Design Issues	Performance measures not limited to student achievement	•			✔	
	Performance measures compared with past performance at the same or other sites	•				✔
Methods of Evaluation	Use quantitative and qualitative data	•				
	Use Title I performance assessments	•				
	Must include community survey			✔		
Use of Findings	Disaggregate assessment results by Title I categories to examine program impact on targeted student groups	•				
	Report to parents			✔		

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Exhibit 2 Example of Completed Worksheet 2: Evaluation Planning Questions

1. What local education needs or conditions were the impetus for developing the reform program?

achievement gaps between ethnic minority and Anglo students in reading and writing at all grade levels
low graduation rates
community concern over poor math scores of 8th graders

2. What are the major elements of the CSRD Program that are pertinent to the evaluation?

alignment of curriculum and improved instruction in mathematics
professional development to support diverse learning styles
parent involvement/community support

3. What are the goals and objectives of the CSRD program?

80% students proficient in math at 8th grade
50% increase in the time available to teachers for professional development
increased parent involvement in child's education

4. Who is interested in your program and...	what do they expect?
district administrators	improved test scores
teachers	more time for planning together
parents	children's enthusiasm for school
model developers	fidelity of model implementation
media	better information about results

5. What will be accepted as credible evidence of progress and impact by each individual or group?

buildingwide adoption of district standards in six months
perceptions of teachers and parents, testimonials
improved student performance on state assessments

6. What resources and technical expertise are available to support the evaluation?

15 days of the district evaluator per year
2 hours of 3 teachers' time per week
funds for 10 days of substitute teachers' time per year

7. What additional resources and expertise are needed?

a local university consultant with expertise in instrument development and data analysis

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Nevertheless, upon review you may find that program descriptions in your proposal are not clear or succinct enough to meet present planning needs; therefore, interpretation may be necessary. Also, you may have to consider additions or changes made to your program since the proposal was written. You should attempt to answer the following questions:

- What are the major elements of the CSRD Program that are pertinent to the evaluation?
- What are the goals and objectives of the CSRD program?

Stakeholders' expectations. Stakeholders are those people who will be involved in the CSRD Program or who are concerned about its success. These individuals (or groups) will have much to say about your program and its results. Identify them early in the evaluation process, and involve them in the evaluation design process as much as possible. One way to begin identifying stakeholders is to learn who was involved in planning and writing your proposal. Identifying stakeholders and their expectations is only part of the task. You also will want to discern what will convince them that the program is successful. You should attempt to answer the following questions:

- Who is interested in the program and what do they expect?
- What will be accepted as credible evidence of progress and impact by each individual or group?

Resources and expertise. Before designing your evaluation, it is important to determine the extent of resources — both financial and personnel — available to the evaluation effort. It is important to think beyond the design phase to the need for ongoing data collection, analysis, and reporting. Funds for evaluation may have been earmarked in your district's proposal.

What budget has been allocated for evaluation? This may be a single line item in the proposal budget or it may be distributed across a number of categories such as salaries, substitute teacher costs, materials development, copying, postage, printing, and consultants. It is also possible that the cost of conducting the evaluation has been completely overlooked in the budget.

Estimating cost before a detailed design is in place is always difficult. However, experience shows that an adequate evaluation budget may be estimated at 10 percent of the total program cost. The cost will be somewhat less if it is possible to pool resources to develop designs and materials that can be used by multiple schools or districts. It is also possible that depending on the CSRD model selected, some provision for collecting and reporting evaluation information already has been made. It will be easier to estimate the cost of your evaluation needs after you have completed your design. A reassessment of your cost estimate at that time is advisable.

Finally, talk with those you expect to be members of the evaluation team to make sure they are aware of this assignment. Assess the evaluation skills and experience the team has in order to decide if using an outside consultant is indicated. The next section discusses the roles an outside consultant can play and how to go about selecting a qualified person. In reviewing the proposal and discussing evaluation expectations, you should attempt to answer the following questions:

- What resources and technical expertise are available to support the evaluation?
- What additional resources and expertise are needed?

Consider Using a Consultant

An outside consultant can assist at every stage of the evaluation. During the early phases, the consultant can help to frame the questions to be asked, identify or modify existing instruments, and negotiate with the reform model developer for access to planned data collection. Later on, the consultant can train staff in data collection methods, develop additional instruments such as checklists, and create systems for organizing and monitoring the evaluation process. Finally, the consultant can assist in analyzing and interpreting the results as well as framing multiple reports for different audiences. You should consider the role the consultant will play and the phases of the evaluation that you should use the consultant.

There is no licensing or credentialing system for evaluators. Therefore, you should not hesitate to gather as much information about prospective evaluators as possible. In addition to the usual resumé or vitae, be sure to obtain references directly from others who have worked with prospective consultants. Ask the evaluator for the names of former clients on projects that are similar to yours. Have the consultant submit a two- or three-page brief that describes how he or she is particularly qualified to assist you with your CSRD evaluation, what approach or method will be used in working with you, and what key issues will need to be discussed and resolved to complete a successful evaluation. Before making a selection, you should consider the adequacy and appropriateness of each prospective evaluator in view of their

- formal preparation in evaluation,
- relevant experience,
- philosophy or orientation to evaluation, and
- personal style and characteristics.

Tips for Planning and Evaluation

- Be sure to consider program improvement as well as demonstrating outcomes as purposes of your evaluation.
- Start thinking now about how and by whom evaluation findings will be used.
- To get a feel for local conditions, review school reports and local newspaper articles; interview community members, parents, administrators, and teachers.
- To learn about your CSR program, examine the proposal and talk with those who wrote it.
- Find out who has an interest in the outcome of the program and what is expected. If differences exist between program goals and stakeholder expectations, stop planning and resolve them immediately.
- Identify staff time, expertise, and resources allocated to complete the evaluation.
- If resources are insufficient, consider working with nearby schools, districts, colleges, or education service agencies to reduce costs or acquire needed expertise.
- Identify key time frames for evaluation information, for example, federal and state reporting cycles, community forums, and legislative sessions.

STAGE 2. DESIGNING THE EVALUATION

Designing the evaluation involves specifying what will be included in the study and how it will be accomplished. Detailed guidance is provided in this section to help you design an evaluation of program context, implementation, and results. The recommendations included in this section are based on the assumption that the context and purpose of your program have been clarified and that an implementation strategy has been established. Only after these steps have been completed will it be possible to select appropriate measures of *intermediate* outcomes and impact to assess progress and appropriate measures of *long-term* outcomes and impact to assess the value of time and money invested in the reform effort.

There are many steps involved in designing an evaluation, most of which are interrelated. What you learned and the determinations you made and documented on Worksheets 1 and 2 serve as a starting point for developing an evaluation design. We suggest that you also use this information to check the adequacy of your final evaluation design. Four major steps need to be completed in the design stage:

- Link evaluation to the program.
- Identify the evaluation questions.
- Choose data sources, variables, and measures.
- Move from planning to action.

Link Evaluation to the Program

In a comprehensive reform initiative, the program components are expected to work together toward the ultimate goal of improved student achievement. To make these connections, you should develop a *program logic model* that specifies the assumptions that link program components. Then review the logic of your program to identify gaps and inconsistencies. Remember that the outcomes are one focus of the evaluation; the others are implementation and the school or district context. For each of these areas of focus, you must develop evaluation questions to frame the design. (The process of developing these questions is described in an upcoming section.)

The program logic model (see Exhibit 3 on page 19) is a graphic representation of how CSRD Program activities are connected with desired outcomes or results. The logic model clarifies connections and underlying assumptions of your program and specifies intermediate outcomes. After you have completed your program logic model, you will be able to develop the program evaluation questions. Figure 1 illustrates how the program logic process leads to the identification of evaluation questions about context, implementation, and outcomes.

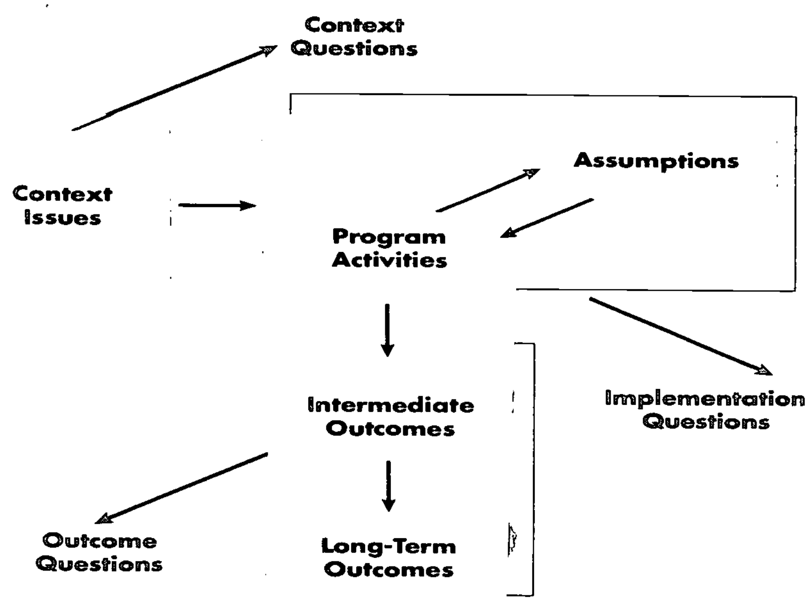

Figure 1. Identification of Evaluation Questions.

Using Worksheet 3 to Create a Program Logic Model

Exhibit 3 shows how Worksheet 3 is used to develop a logic model for your program that will drive the evaluation design and questions. To complete Worksheet 3, you will need your proposal, materials about implementation from the reform model developer, and a completed Worksheet 2. The first step in completing Worksheet 3 is to use the left-most box to list the local conditions, issues, or concerns that form the backdrop and that may influence the success of your reform effort.

The next step is to use the Program Elements column to list the key aspects of the program. (It is not necessary to link specific program elements to the issues you listed in the left-hand box.) The program elements should not be tasks such as "schedule the professional development sessions with the reform model developer." Rather, they should be fairly broad, for example "professional development" or "curriculum and assessment alignment." If your proposal defines program components, these may serve the purpose. Some states are requiring schools to use the nine federal program requirements as the components of their evaluation plans.

Exhibit 3 Example of Completed Worksheet 3: Comprehensive School Reform Program Logic Model

Contextual Issues	Program Elements	Assumptions – IF –	Intermediate Outcomes – THEN –	
• Large number of newly licensed teachers • In most families, both parents work • Small but growing segment of Laotian students • School board has made science a priority • Both science and math scores are very low	Professional Development	• Teachers receive training in classroom management • Teachers work in grade-level support groups	There will be an increase in instructional time Students will be on task more often	Improved Student Achievement
	Weekly Parent News	• Parents receive and read the newsletter • Parents are asked to send concerns to the newsletter	Parents will support homework completion Fewer students will be tardy or absent	
	New Science Kits	• Kits support hands-on science lessons • Kits contain performance assessment pieces	Science instruction will improve Science curriculum will be linked to standards Student interest in science will increase	
	Math Curriculum Alignment	• Teachers identify math content in a spiral curriculum • Math content is scheduled to match the state tests	Students will be prepared for grade-level tests Duplication of "favorite" math topics will end	

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Entries in the third column, Assumptions, along with entries in the fourth column, Intermediate Outcomes, are explicit statements of the underlying logic about how program elements lead to goals and outcomes. List the assumptions and intermediate outcomes underlying each program element in the boxes adjacent to the elements. You may want to write them as "if/then" statements. For example, if professional development is a program element, your statement might be "*if* teachers receive training in classroom management, *then* students will be on task more often."

Given the program elements you have specified, identify one or more assumptions and intermediate outcomes associated with each, as shown in Exhibit 3. If you need to establish more frequent benchmarks, you may have several "if" and "then" statements in a row leading toward improved student achievement. However, because it will be necessary to collect data to determine if each outcome is being realized, it is best to limit the overall number of benchmarks to a well-selected set. Note that all of these outcomes are intended to move your school or district toward the ultimate goal of improved student achievement.

Now review the logic model. Does your planned program make sense? If the intermediate outcomes are realized, will you accomplish your goals for improved student achievement? Are the assumptions sound? Are these the right set of activities to accomplish the intermediate goals? Are there gaps? There is little point in conducting an evaluation if the program is not well designed to accomplish its goals.

Identify the Evaluation Questions

Using Worksheet 4 to Summarize Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions are the framework of the evaluation design. Exhibit 4 includes examples of three kinds of evaluation questions — context, implementation, and outcomes — that should be recorded on Worksheet 4. *Context questions* address the factors that may influence your program and concerns related to the unique characteristics of your school (e.g., changes in population, changes in the economic make-up of the district).[5] *Implementation questions* are more practical. The overarching question is, "Did you do what you said you would do?" *Outcomes questions* ask, "Have you realized the intended goals or objectives?" or "What impact has the program had?" Draft a list of questions in each area. Then revisit your completed Worksheets 1 and 2 to be certain you have included all the necessary areas to be addressed.

[5] Insight into the nature of contextual factors and implementation issues that can influence the outcome of reform efforts can be found in *New American Schools after Six Years* (1998) by T. K. Glennan, Jr. Santa Monica: Rand Education.

Exhibit 4 Example of Completed Worksheet 4: Summary of Evaluation Questions

Context Questions	Implementation Questions	Outcomes Questions
C.1 Are *all* students benefiting from the reform?	I.1 Did all teachers participate in the professional development?	O.1 Has instructional time increased and noninstructional time decreased?
C.2 Are staff and parents committed to the reform?	I.2 Did teachers use the science kits as intended?	O.2 Did students arrive at school on time?
C.3 Are science materials adequate and accessible?	I.3 Were parent concerns sent to be included in the newsletter?	O.3 Has science instruction improved?
etc.	etc.	etc.

Choose Data Sources, Variables, and Measures

One of the most important aspects of evaluation design is determining the best sources to use in answering the evaluation questions (as shown in Figure 2). Documents, people, and events all are likely sources. The best sources are those that are closest to the matter you are evaluating, but using them may not be possible or cost effective. What you want to learn from each source is defined by the variables and measures.

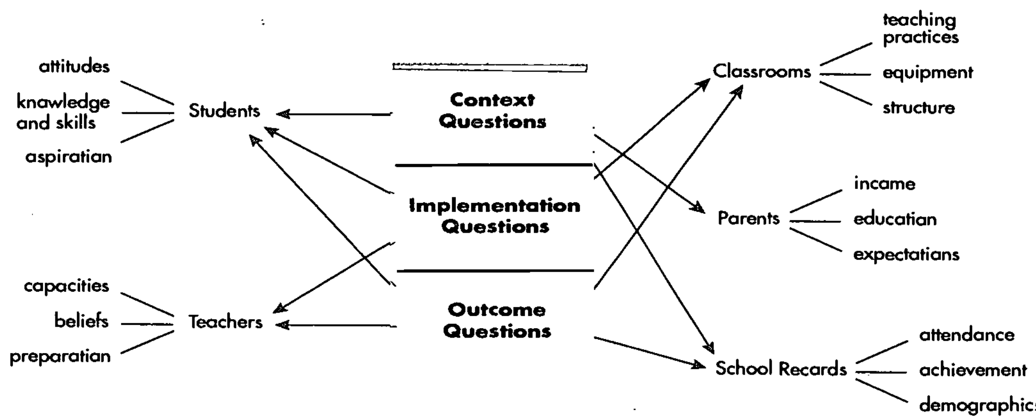

Figure 2. Evaluation Questions and the Sources and Types of Information Needed to Answer Them.

Using Worksheet 5 to Create an Evaluation Design Matrix

Exhibit 5 provides an example of a completed Worksheet 5. The evaluation design matrix is one of the primary components of the evaluation design. To complete Worksheet 5, begin by transferring the questions from Worksheet 4 to the first column of Worksheet 5. Now you are ready to consider the best sources of data for each of the three kinds of questions. As you can see from the examples provided in Exhibit 5, sources of data include existing records and documents (e.g., student test scores, equipment inventory), people (e.g., teachers, students, parents), and events (e.g., meetings or classroom teaching sessions). Select the best source, or sources if needed, to provide data for each question.

For each question and data source, you must also identify the relevant variables and measures. The variables operationalize — make specific — the evaluation questions. For example, as shown in Exhibit 5 for the context question, "Are all students benefiting from the reform?", the variables are student attitudes and performance of students of different race and gender.

As shown in Exhibit 5, measures are the specific means you will use to assign values to the variables. Using multiple measures of student performance is good practice. Supplement state assessments of student performance with local- or school-developed assessments if they are available; these may be better aligned with local curricula. Include additional measures of student and school

Exhibit 5 Example of Completed Worksheet 5: Evaluation Design Matrix

Evaluation Questions	Possible Data Sources	Variables	Measures	Available
CONTEXT				
1. Are *all* students benefiting from the reform?	Disaggregated test results	Student performance by race and gender	Test scores	Y
	Students	Student attitudes	Grades	Y
2. Are staff and parents committed to the reform?	Parents	Parent support	Attendance at conferences	Y
	Staff	Staff involvement	Participation in meetings	Y
3. Are science materials adequate and accessible?	Teachers	Quality of materials	Teacher ratings	N
	Equipment and materials inventory	Accessibility of materials	Usage logs	Y
IMPLEMENTATION				
1. Did all teachers participate in the professional development?	Professional Development sessions	Teacher participation	Attendance	Y
2. Did teachers use the science kits as intended?	Science instruction periods	Science instruction methods	Kit use practices	N
3. Were parent concerns sent to be included in the newsletter?	Newsletter issues	Parent awareness	Parent questions	N
OUTCOME				
1. Has instructional time increased and noninstructional time decreased?	Classroom sessions	Use of time	Instructional and noninstructional time	N
2. Did students arrive at school on time?	Attendance records	Timeliness	Tardiness records	Y
3. Has science instruction improved?	Science instruction periods	Quality of science instruction	Instructional practices	N

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performance in your evaluation to obtain a broader view of the value of your CSRD Program. Choose those that reasonably can be related to program goals. Examples include attendance, grade promotion, graduation, suspension, and expulsion rates; course-taking patterns; and parent time in classrooms. When you have completed the Variables and Measures columns, you should know exactly what information you will use to answer the evaluation questions.

Move from Planning to Action

With the questions and related data needs specified, you are now ready to specify what will be done, by whom, and when. This step involves defining meaningful tasks and realistic time lines. An important timing issue is when to collect baseline data, which are often needed to answer impact and outcome questions. In some cases (e.g., student test scores), data can be collected any time during the project; in other cases (e.g., teacher attitudes), data must be collected when the project begins in order to provide a basis for later comparisons. You should also review data reports that have already been completed to make use of existing data in your study.

Other important sources of data include your reform model developer and the CSRD state evaluator. If the CSRD model you are using includes data collection, check the variables covered and time frames for collection. Find out how you can gain access to the data and whether you can add items as needed. In addition, check with your state coordinator to discuss state-level plans for CSRD evaluation. Again, data may be available through the work of a statewide evaluation and you may be able to add questions to a planned survey or interview. If these arrangements can be made, you will save considerable time not only for the data collectors but also in some cases for teachers, students, or parents who are the sources. You will also need to identify logistical issues that must be resolved (e.g., access to records, classrooms, and teachers), as well as specify areas where an outside consultant could be of assistance. In addition, virtually all of the external requirements (listed on Worksheet 1) for evaluating your CSRD Program must be addressed in this design stage.

Using Worksheet 6 to Create an Evaluation Schedule

Exhibit 6 offers examples of how evaluation tasks can be organized into an evaluation schedule on Worksheet 6. To generate your list of evaluation tasks for the first column of Worksheet 6, begin by reviewing the evaluation questions. Next create a plan or schedule that organizes the work into tasks to be assigned to different members of the team. This will keep the questions central to your work and prevent you from losing sight of them as the work itself progresses.

Exhibit 6 Example of Completed Worksheet 6: Evaluation Design Schedule

Evaluation Tasks	Evaluation Questions Addressed	Responsibility	Schedule
Pre/post observations of science teaching	I.2 Did teachers use the science kits as intended? O.3 Has science instruction improved?	Mr. Smith Science Dept. Chair	Fall 1999 Spring 2000, 2001, 2002
Review of student records	C.1 Are *all* students benefiting from the reform? O.2 Did students arrive at school on time?	Mrs. Jones Assistant Principal	Fall 1999 Spring 2002
Parent interviews	C.2 Are staff and parents committed to the reform? I.3 Were parent concerns sent to be included in the newsletter?	Ms. Brown Evaluation Consultant	Fall 1999 Spring 2002
Use of science materials	I.2 Did teachers use the science kits as intended? C.3 Are science materials adequate and accessible?	Mr. Smith Science Dept. Chair	Spring 2000 Spring 2002
Teacher Records BEST COPY AVAILABLE	I.1 Did all teachers participate in the professional development? O.1 Has instructional time increased and noninstructional time decreased?	Mrs. Jones Assistant Principal	Spring 2000 Spring 2000
etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.

By grouping evaluation questions that have common aspects, rather than working with them one by one, the evaluation design — and consequently data collection — can be made more efficient. One natural grouping is questions that rely on the same information source. For example, if there are several questions that can be answered by teachers, perhaps a single teacher survey is the most appropriate evaluation tool to efficiently collect the data needed to answer them. An alternative may be to group questions with a common focus. For instance, a context question about staff commitment may be conceptually connected to an implementation question about use of new materials. Thus, you may choose to collect data on commitment during interviews about use of materials. Of course, some questions will necessitate the use of more than one data collection method.

In short, the intent of grouping questions into clusters is to help organize and streamline the data collection process. Still, your evaluation plan needs to be flexible, and this is one area you will want to refine as the evaluation proceeds. Defining and assigning the tasks as part of planning initiates the process. The next chapter provides guidance on selecting and implementing data collection methods.

Tips for Designing an Evaluation

- Focus initial evaluation efforts on implementation questions. The findings obtained can be used to improve program operations.
- Don't forget to plan and schedule the collection of baseline data.
- Plan to use existing data whenever possible and to integrate evaluation data collection into existing procedures as much as possible.
- Coordinate the data collection and reporting requirements of your CSRD program with the requirements of other programs in place. For example, the reporting requirements of Title I clearly overlap with CSRD requirements.
- Look for opportunities to use the same measures to answer multiple evaluation questions.

STAGE 3. CONDUCTING THE EVALUATION

It is time to get down to business and put the results of your planning and designing efforts into practice. Specifically, conducting the evaluation entails the following steps:

- Obtain or create data collection instruments.
- Collect the data.
- Prepare the data for analysis.
- Analyze the data.

Obtain or Create Data Collection Instruments

Data collection is the most time-intensive part of the evaluation. It is important to do all that you can to make it efficient. If staff members with the appropriate expertise are not available in-house, then consultants should be used to oversee instrument development, data collection, and data analysis.

You should use available instruments whenever possible. The instruments you need will likely include surveys, checklists, observation tools, and interview protocols. Even if an existing instrument does not quite address all the data needs you have, it is easier to adapt it than to develop a new one from scratch. If you must develop your own instrument, be sure to pilot test it to identify unclear instructions and confusing items. This can be done with a sample of respondents from the same or parallel source (e.g., a few teachers from a different grade level than that needed for the evaluation). After you make necessary changes, the instrument is ready to use.

Table 3 lists the advantages and disadvantages of common data collection procedures. Some concerns to keep in mind include protecting the confidentiality of respondents, considering time demands on both respondents and data collectors, and preparing those who will collect data. Interview guides and checklists are a fairly simple way to ensure consistent data collection across collectors and time periods. On the other hand, observations (e.g., of classroom teaching), make it more difficult to ensure data consistency and often require a data coding protocol and training of observers to be effective.

Table 3
Advantages and Drawbacks of Various Data Collection Procedures

Procedure	Advantages	Disadvantages
Self-administered questionnaire	Inexpensive. Can be quickly administered if distributed to group. Well suited for simple and short questionnaires.	No control for misunderstood questions, missing data, or untruthful responses. Not suited for exploration of complex issues.
Interviewer-administered questionnaires	Interviewer can probe to ensure question is understood. With good rapport, may obtain useful open-ended comments, including evidence to support response.	Confidentiality is an issue. May require hiring interviewers. Training is needed to establish consistency, nature, and use of probing questions.
Open-ended interviews	Usually yields richest data, details, new insights. Best if in-depth information is wanted.	Same as above (interviewer-administered questionnaires); also often difficult to analyze.
Focus groups	Useful for gathering ideas and different viewpoints, discovering new insights, & improving question design.	Not suited for generalizations about population being studied.
Tests	Provide "hard" data, which administrators and funding agencies often prefer. Relatively easy to administer. Good instruments may be available from vendors.	Available instruments may be unsuitable. Developing and validating new project-specific tests may be expensive and time consuming. Objections may be raised because of test unfairness or bias.
Observations	If well executed, best for obtaining data about behavior of individuals and groups.	Usually expensive. Needs well-qualified staff. Observation may affect behavior being studied.
Documents, records, and student work	Existing materials can be used to develop data at a convenient time.	Checklists or rubrics for generating data from the written material must be created. Careful definitions must be established to ensure consistency.

Note: Adapted from *User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation* (p. 44), by F. Stevens, F. Lawrenz, and L. Sharp (n.d.), Directorate for Education and Human Resources, National Science Foundation.

An important decision related to designing data collection instruments and strategies has to do with maintaining the confidentiality of information. Confidentiality helps respondents feel comfortable being honest because they know they will not be punished for their views. It also means that they can comment on another person's performance without fear of damaging their relationship with that person. (If your design calls for a pre/post survey or test and you wish to maintain confidentiality, you will need to assign ID numbers to the respondents and keep a confidential file linking names with numbers for use at the time of the post-test.) Confidentiality also makes handling of the data more cumbersome, given the procedures necessary to protect identity. Anonymity is easier to handle — there is no identifying name or information on the instrument — but then you definitely cannot report the same kinds of information. And, you cannot easily remind those who have not yet completed the instrument that a response is needed.

After you have selected or designed your instruments, it is important to reexamine them in view of the evaluation questions being addressed. Too often at this stage, the process and procedures of data collection take precedence over the substance of the questions to be answered. Be sure that all survey and interview items and observation protocols focus on the measures you have selected to answer each question. In addition, because you will in all likelihood be relying on existing databases or records (e.g., measures of student academic performance or student attendance), it will be necessary to develop a process for selecting the information you need and, in some cases, transferring it to a new database for use in the evaluation.

Collect the Data

Data collection involves scheduling, initial and follow-up information gathering, and data management. Timeliness in completing major data collection and analysis tasks and reporting the results to key stakeholders is most important. A data collection plan should specify when data will be collected, from whom it will be collected, and the steps needed to complete the process.

Using Worksheet 7 to Plan Data Collection

On Worksheet 6 you prepared a broad overview of the evaluation tasks. Now refer to Exhibit 7, which offers an example of a completed data collection plan. To ensure consistent data collection across all sites and data collectors, the evaluation team should develop precise protocols, checklists, logs, and standardized forms. This task should be included in the data collection plan. Districts or schools should consider providing appropriate staff development opportunities to build staff members' skills in data collection and analysis.

Exhibit 7 Example of Completed Worksheet 7: Data Collection Plan

Tasks	Sources	Steps to Accomplish	Schedule
Pre/post observations of science teaching	Elementary Science Teaching/Classrooms	1. Identify observation tool 2. Train data collection team 3. Get teaching schedules 4. Conduct observations 5. Convert observations to data sheets 6. Enter data, compile, analyze	August 1999 September 1999 September 1999 October 1999 October 1999 November 1999
Review of student records	Disaggregated test results Attendance records	1. Identify tests, grade levels to monitor 2. Request 3-year history of relevant scores 3. Enter data 4. Determine method to monitor attendance (groups or individuals, time frames) 5. Collect records 6. Enter data for baseline	All September 1999
Parent interviews	Parents of 4th to 6th graders	1. Determine sample to be interviewed 2. Send letter home to selected parents with consent form 3. Develop interview protocol 4. Train interviewers 5. Schedule interviews 6. Conduct interviews 7. Convert notes to data entry format 8. Enter data	October 1999 October 1999 October 1999 October 1999 October 1999 November 1999 November 1999 December 1999

Tips for Conducting the Evaluation: *Getting Started*

- To make ongoing data collection more efficient, create a list or database of contact information for various groups of individuals who will serve as sources of data.
- Carefully plan data analysis procedures at the outset. Consider using a consultant to start on the right foot if this expertise is not available in-house.
- Document data collection and data analysis procedures early in the evaluation process. You will need this information for reporting and for making revisions to the evaluation plan.

Prepare the Data for Analysis

Data come in multiple forms. If you have designed your instruments well, you will have simplified the preparation steps. Quantitative data — from survey forms, checklists, or extracted from records — are generally ready to be entered into your database and used in analysis.

Some checking for data coding problems is needed. How you will handle missing data and obviously incorrect data (e.g., a child's age reported as 30), must be determined. In addition, some survey questions may have required a brief narrative response that must be converted into a form suitable for analysis.

For example, perhaps you asked teachers to list their most frequently used teaching methods. In order to reduce the data to meaningful categories, you will need to compile a list of responses and then look for repeated methods. Each category should be assigned a unique identifier (e.g., a number or letter) so that you will be able to report the frequency of each of these methods. The person who creates the list must be able to determine when different wording still indicates the same method.

Qualitative data require a more labor-intensive preparation and analysis process. (There are software programs you may want to use that can help you prepare and analyze data.[6]) For example, preparation of qualitative data will be

[6]Renata Tesch (1990) discusses qualitative analysis programs in her book *Qualitative Research: Analysis Types and Software Tools.*

necessary if you conducted parent interviews and included open-ended questions about parents' confidence in the school. The responses will likely vary in length and substance. Preparation of the data entail transcribing interviewer notes into a consistent format and then establishing a set of categories into which the responses can be organized and coded.

Analyze the Data

Too often, schools and districts gather evaluation data without having the appropriate methods for analyzing or interpreting the results. If you have kept your design reasonably simple, a first step is to report descriptive information. In the case of quantitative data, descriptive information typically includes frequencies of response (e.g., how many selected "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," "strongly disagree," or "neutral") and the average, or mean, response value. The results of this analysis could be reported for all respondents or reported for selected subgroups of respondents (e.g., teachers, administrators, parents). More complicated statistical analyses can be used to compare groups or subgroups or to note how people who responded to one set of questions responded to another related set of questions.

At a simple level, analysis is the process of combining data from individuals into a common result. At a more meaningful level, it involves interpreting sets of findings and looking across them to better understand them and create a more comprehensive answer to an evaluation question. Interpreting data entails arriving at a reasonable explanation for the results obtained. To arrive at the best and most plausible interpretation of findings, it is important to first consider rival explanations and then to systematically rule out invalid options.

To illustrate, if survey results reveal that parents are not comfortable with the reform process, a reasonable conclusion might be that change often is difficult and not supported by all stakeholders. However, plausible rival explanations might include that only disenchanted parents responded to the survey questions; this alternative explanation can be ruled out or validated by examining the process used for selecting parent respondents. If, in addition to parent survey responses about the reform, the findings from a focus group indicated that participating parents did not like to see things change, a stronger case for parent opposition to change can be made. In this case, the rival explanation that only a group of disenfranchised parents were uncomfortable with change can be more easily dismissed.

The coded qualitative data also provide descriptive findings. You will be able to report the major themes that resulted from the data collection and whether groups differed in how they responded. Qualitative data often can make sense of discrepancies found in the quantitative data and validate or invalidate

alternative explanations. The analysis and interpretation tasks are the most important and most challenging of the evaluation process itself.

The team needs to work together to develop explanations for the results and validate them across all available sources. By presenting a draft of interpretations to various involved groups, each group's comments and conclusions may further enrich the results. This process frequently engages stakeholders in developing recommendations for improvement.

Tips for Conducting the Evaluation: *Analysis and Interpretation*

- Don't rely solely on statistical analysis; other forms of analysis may better serve your needs.
- Allow sufficient time to conduct thoughtful and in-depth analyses.
- As a team, ask yourselves, "Do the results make sense? What are the possible explanations of findings and how will the results help us decide what actions will improve the program?"
- Involve others in interpreting the results to gain insights from their experiences and to maintain their excitement about and involvement in the evaluation.

STAGE 4. REPORTING THE FINDINGS

Now that the hard work is done, the *really* hard work begins. It is time to let those interested in the new program know just what you are learning about the program, its outcomes, and impact. Effective reporting of evaluation findings includes the following steps:

- Organize study findings.
- Select appropriate reporting media and formats.
- Frame the findings as recommendations.
- Deliver/disseminate the findings.

Organize Study Findings

Audiences for the evaluation findings may include district administrators and board members, parents and community members, the organization that developed and supports the reform model you have implemented, and state and school staff. On Worksheets 1 and 2, you already described the data needs and expectations of these various stakeholder groups. This information can be used to determine types of reports that you need to develop to best convey your findings and recommendations. Most audiences prefer a fairly succinct report; some may be interested in only one aspect of the information.

Creating a master data file or report that compiles all background information, evaluation questions, analysis, results, findings, and recommendations provides the foundation for meeting various reporting needs. You might also choose to incorporate any evaluation reports completed by others (e.g., the state department of education, other schools in your district) in your file or report. Synthesizing your project evaluation in this way will help you meet the needs of the most demanding audience.

Consider preparing shorter, successive evaluation reports that document the progress of implementation and immediate or interim outcomes. This will facilitate providing feedback to administrators and staff in a timely manner so they can make mid-course corrections as program implementation proceeds. It will also help others in the school district to make needed changes.

Developing interim reports of program results also will allow reform model developers to provide evidence to stakeholders of the benefits of the CSRD Program. This will help to generate "buy-in" from those stakeholders who may not have supported the CSRD Program initially.

Select Reporting Media and Formats

It is also important to ensure that your evaluation results are formatted in a way that stakeholders can easily use them. Reporting formats should be developed to link data to particular issues that concern government agencies, school boards, parents, and other stakeholders. For example, principals might prefer to receive computer-generated summaries of assessments, disaggregated by student groups receiving different types of instruction. School boards or state officials, on the other hand, might prefer to receive statistical progress reports with charts and graphs that compare student performance across years or buildings. Parents might prefer a narrative report that is formatted to respond to the key concerns they have already identified. In addition, be sure to develop reports in the languages that are relevant to your school community.

Frame the Findings as Recommendations

The CSRD evaluation is intended to be an integral part of the CSRD Program; it should be used to make program improvements. One of the most important ways that this can be realized is to frame the findings as specific recommendations for program improvement. If you engaged stakeholders in the interpretation process, recommendations may have already begun to emerge from that discussion. Therefore, suggestions for modification or change will not come as an uncomfortable surprise to these stakeholders.

Nevertheless, putting the recommendations in writing will give them more weight and visibility with decision makers who have not been as directly involved in the evaluation process. For example, if there are aspects of the reform effort that are not working well, putting the recommendations for change in the evaluation report will encourage participants to make the changes than merely presenting a set of findings. Developing recommendations is neither an easy task nor one without consequence for the evaluation team — especially when there is substantial resistance to change. Working through the recommendations in advance with key decision makers is important.

Deliver/Disseminate Findings

If you expect individuals or groups to take action, simply handing or mailing them a written report is seldom sufficient. When your findings are important for one or more groups to hear, consider presenting those findings orally and engaging each group in a discussion or question-and-answer session. Seek out

multiple occasions (perhaps as part of previously scheduled meetings) to keep your audiences informed. Placing brief articles in newsletters and posting information on available Web sites also are effective strategies for keeping stakeholders informed and interested.

Tips for Reporting Evaluation Findings

- Consider creating a "master" data file or report that compiles all the local context, program characteristics, baseline data, and evaluation findings to date. Once developed, the file is relatively easy to update with new data and findings.
- Use the "master" data file to create reports and presentations tailored to key audiences. Consider developing at least the following:
    - a written executive summary of the findings;
    - an oral presentation supported with overheads or a computer-based presentation; and
    - a briefing paper that highlights key evaluation findings and recommendations.
- Don't forget to include recommendations for improvement in your reports and presentations. They are the blueprint for program improvement.

STAGE 5. ENCOURAGING USE OF THE FINDINGS

You're not quite done. Reporting the findings does not ensure that they will be used in any meaningful way. The value in the work you have done to evaluate your CSRD effort and understand the underlying conditions and causes of the progress made or the outcomes and impact realized rests in the opportunity to improve the effort with each new finding. Although your evaluation team may include a key administrator who can set directions based on findings, this is not usually sufficient to ensure that the findings will be integrated into the ongoing work of reform. Encouraging the use of the findings means enabling various stakeholders to more sharply focus their involvement and practices toward an even better result. In order to encourage stakeholders to use evaluation findings, consider the following:

- Create opportunities to discuss findings.
- Revise the evaluation plan as necessary.
- Follow up with stakeholders to determine how findings are used.

Create Opportunities to Discuss Findings

Create opportunities to discuss evaluation findings and their use with administrators and others. Be sure to ask that sufficient time be made available to present your findings and to discuss recommendations. Keep your presentation short, but be specific about suggested changes. Allow time for open discussion with the teaching staff; you may even choose to present a draft of the report to the audience and then offer to incorporate their feedback in the final version. In addition, you may want to enlist students in reporting findings to parents, especially if they have had a role in data collection.

Using Worksheet 8 to Summarize Actions

Exhibit 8 illustrates how Worksheet 8 is used as a planning and tracking form to record your efforts to encourage the use of evaluation findings. Building a broad base of people who have heard the recommendations will support administrators in taking action. Therefore, be sure to plan to present the recommendations to a variety of audiences and key individuals.

Exhibit 8 Example of Completed Worksheet 8:
Summary of Actions Taken to Encourage Use of Evaluation Findings

Team Member	Action Planned	When Planned	When Completed	Outcome
Tom Johnson	Give written evaluation report to superintendent	1-1-99	4-1-99	Changed professional development plan
Jane Smith	Give 30-minute presentation to school board	2-1-99	5-1-99	Added 3 inservice days to school calender

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Revise Evaluation Plan as Necessary

Once you have determined how the findings were used and what other information might be helpful, you may need to revise your evaluation plan. This step of considering how the evaluation results can better reach the key players needs careful thinking. Of course, your plan will also need revising as the program is revised.

Follow Up with Stakeholders

You should follow up with at least the key members of your audiences to determine how they are using the findings and what other information needs they might have. On Worksheet 8 you can record actions taken as a result of your efforts to encourage use. If evaluation findings are not used in the early stages of the program, the reform may not be fully implemented. For example, if teachers lack needed materials and no attempt is made to supply them, they cannot possibly implement the program as planned. In later stages, as outcome results are available about what works and what does not, findings and recommendations should be incorporated into longer-range school planning.

Tips for Encouraging Use of the Findings

- Be sure that findings are tailored for use by specific groups.
- Be specific and give examples of what might be done in the future in your presentations and reports.
- Let each stakeholder group know that using the findings is important and that you will be checking back to see if you can be of assistance.
- Always follow up with key members of stakeholder groups to gain new insights.

RESOURCES

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Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative Research: Analysis Types and Software Tools*. NY: Falmer Press.

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WEB SITES

http://www.mcrel.org/CSRD/

McREL's CSRD Web site lists schools and districts in the region that are implementing comprehensive school reform models, including both funded and nonfunded sites. The Web site also provides descriptions of CSRD models and gives hyperlinks to reform model developers' Web pages. In addition, it lists materials designed to help district and school leaders reallocate resources to support school reform.

http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/

The U.S. Department of Education's CSRD Web site provides a variety of resources, including an extensive overview of the CSRD program, case studies of local efforts to implement CSRD models, and updates on CSRD program funding.

http://www.ed.gov/inits/americareads/resourcekit/MakingInfo/miwfy1.html

This page links to the U.S. Department of Education report *Comprehensive Strategies for Children and Families: Collecting and Using Good Information for a Good Cause.* Although not specifically related to CSRD, the report provides guidance on collecting and using data to design, implement, and evaluate comprehensive reform strategies.

http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/natspec/catalog/

This page provides online access to the *Catalog of School Reform Models* (1st ed.) and its Addendum, developed by the nation's regional educational laboratories to provide information on 26 entire-school, or whole-school, reform models and 18 skill- and content-based models.

http:www.temple.edu/LSS/CSR.htm

This page provides a wide variety of resources, including a searchable database of state applications for federal CSRD funds, many of which contain descriptions of state requirements for local CSRD program evaluations.

http://www.sedl.org/csrd/awards.html

This page provides access to a searchable, nationwide database of schools that have been awarded CSRD funds. The database can be searched according to location, grade range (e.g., elementary, junior high/middle school, and senior/high school), and CSRD model.

http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/ccvi/15_Regional_Centers_map.html

This page gives contact information for the 15 Department of Education-funded Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers. The mission of the centers is to provide technical assistance to Title I schoolwide programs and to help local education agencies (and schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs) with high percentages or numbers of children in poverty.

APPENDIX

WORKSHEETS FOR TEAM USE

Worksheet 1: Alignment of Evaluation Requirements

Worksheet 2: Evaluation Planning Questions

Worksheet 3: Comprehensive School Reform Program Logic Model

Worksheet 4: Summary of Evaluation Questions

Worksheet 5: Evaluation Design Matrix

Worksheet 6: Evaluation Design Schedule

Worksheet 7: Data Collection Plan

Worksheet 8: Summary of Actions Taken to Encourage Use of Evaluation Findings

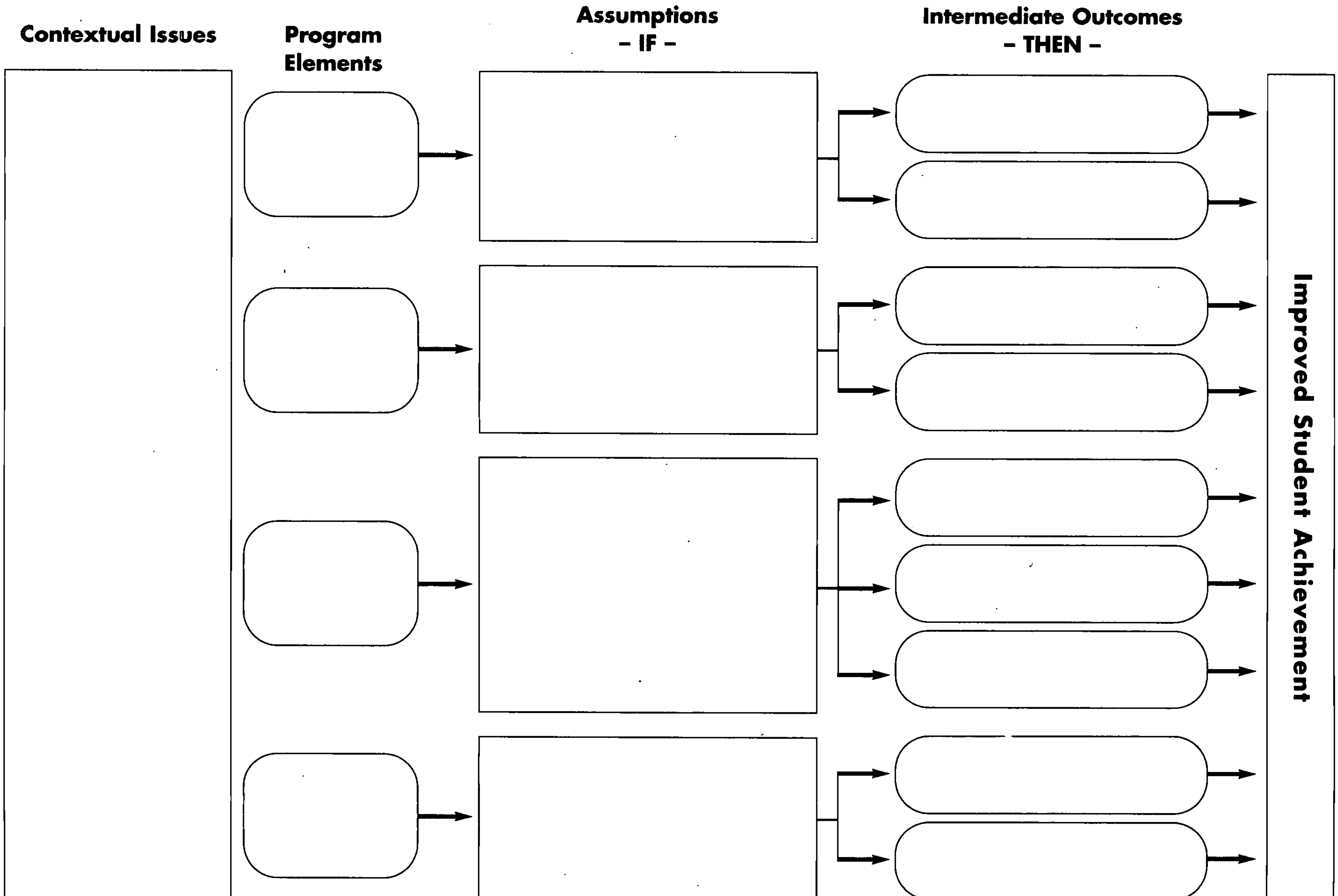
Worksheet 1: Alignment of Evaluation Requirements

Category	**List of Requirements** Federal, State, District, Building	**Source** Check as many as apply.				
		Federal	State	District	Building	Reform Model Developer
Purpose/Objectives of Evaluation	Measure impact on student academic performance	•				
	Relate performance measures to intended program outcomes	•				
	Program implementation assessed	•				
	Program start-up and long-term maintenance examined	•				
	Stakeholder support	•				
	Parental participation	•				
	Staff development	•				
	Monitoring for performance should be tracked	•				
	Nature, extent, source, and perceived usefulness of external technical assistance assessed	•				
Evaluation Design Issues	Performance measures not limited to student achievement	•				
	Performance measures compared with past performance at the same or other sites	•				
Methods of Evaluation	Use quantitative and qualitative data	•				
	Use Title I performance assessments	•				
Use of Findings	Disaggregate assessment results by Title I categories to examine program impact on targeted student groups	•				

Worksheet 2: Evaluation Planning Questions

1. What local education needs or conditions were the impetus for developing the reform program?	
2. What are the major elements of the CSRD Program that are pertinent to the evaluation?	
3. What are the goals and objectives of the CSRD program?	
4. Who is interested in your program and...	what do they expect?
5. What will be accepted as credible evidence of progress and impact by each individual or group?	
6. What resources and technical expertise are available to support the evaluation?	
7. What additional resources and expertise are needed?	

Worksheet 3: Comprehensive School Reform Program Logic Model



Worksheet 4: Summary of Evaluation Questions

Context Questions	Implementation Questions	Outcomes Questions

Worksheet 5: Evaluation Design Matrix

Evaluation Questions	Possible Data Sources	Variables	Measures	Available

Worksheet 6: Evaluation Design Schedule

Evaluation Tasks	Evaluation Questions Addressed	Responsibility	Schedule

Worksheet 7: Data Collection Plan

Tasks	Sources	Steps to Accomplish	Schedule

Worksheet 8: Summary of Actions Taken to Encourage Use of Evaluation Findings

Team Member	Action Planned	When Planned	When Completed	Outcome

NOTICE

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